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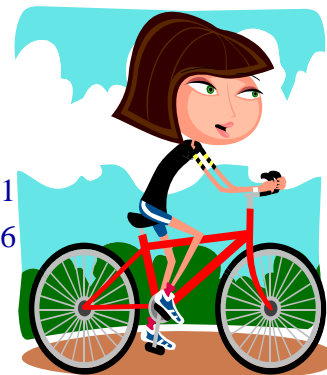
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The Busy Body

Volume 1, Issue 1
Spring 2006



Arizona Insufficient in Meeting Physical Activity Recommendations

According to the 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 71 percent of Arizona's youth participated in insufficient moderate physical activity. Moderate physical activity was defined as engaging in activity for 30 minutes or more per day, on five or more of the past seven days.

The Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 recommends that children and adolescents engage in at LEAST 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week, preferably daily.

Lack of physical activity

has played a key role in the alarming increase in overweight and obesity in children and adults over the last 20 years.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that the number of overweight children has more than tripled since 1980, which translates into nine million overweight children.

In Arizona, 24 percent of low-income children between two and five years of age are overweight, or at risk of becoming overweight.

With the increase in overweight adults and children there has been a parallel increase in the frequency of type 2 diabetes.

In 2003, the CDC reported that one-in-three Americans born in 2000 will develop diabetes at some point in their lives. Moreover, the American Diabetes Association reports that as many as 80 percent of children may be overweight at the time of diagnosis.

For more information on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 visit www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines

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♦ The CDC reports that 24 percent of low-income children between two and five years of age in Arizona are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.



Health Benefits of Physical Activity

Engaging in recommended levels of physical activity not only facilitates healthy weight management, but also reduces blood pressure, increases metabolism, improves immune function, and acts as a healthy stress-coping strategy.

In addition, physical activity reduces the risk of major chronic illnesses including: cardiovascular disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis and hypertension.

Healthy lifestyle education and training should begin in

youth to promote healthy living in adult life. Inactive children are more likely to become inactive adults.

Building Physical Activity in the Day

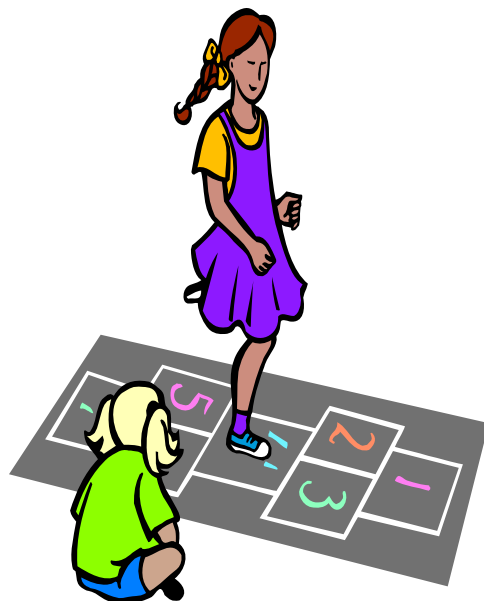
Encouraging physical activity in children requires positive attitudes, behaviors and role models. Building active living means incorporating physical activities into the daily routine.

Here are some tips to help children become more physically active:

- Set the example. Be active yourself and make physical activity part of your daily routine.
- Provide opportunities for children to be active by playing with them.
- Give children active toys and equipment, and take them places where they can be active.

- Offer positive reinforcement for the physical activities in which children participate in.
- Find a convenient place to be active regularly.
- Limit the time children watch television, or other sedentary pastimes.
- Be creative.
- Make physical activity fun!

For more information on how to encourage physical activity in children visit the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov



Fun Activities to Include in your Centers

Stretching activities not only provide good methods of adding physical activity, but they also assist in building one of the five components of physical fitness, flexibility.

The Seed-to-Flower stretch is a wonderful, fun, physical group warm-up activity that works with all ages.

Begin in a circle and adopt the seed position (crouched and hunched). Instruct the children to imagine them-

selves growing into a flower. Slowly have the children sprout and grow. Encourage them to stand up on their tippy toes, arms outstretched towards the sun.

Repeat, getting faster each time, leading eventually to jumping in unison and letting out loud “ahhhs!”

You can find the Seed-to-Flower stretch and other activities at www.wilderdom.com/games

**Be creative.
Try something
different on
alternating
days.**

Hamburger Relay

This is an entertaining relay-race game in which children become waiters and waitresses.

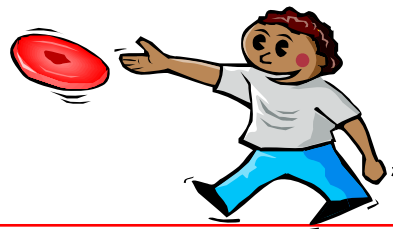
Create four to eight lines with any number of children per line, as well as a start line and finish line. Each line leader balances a small ball, the ‘hamburger,’ on a Frisbee, the ‘tray.’

Once you say ‘go’ the first ‘waitperson’ walks, jogs, or runs to a

finish line. If the ‘hamburger’ falls off the ‘tray’ the child must perform five jumping jacks, or sit-ups, or other selected form of activity, before continuing.

After the child reaches the finish line, he or she returns to the starting line and relays the ‘hamburger’ and ‘tray’ to the next in line. Continue until all players have finished the relay.

You can find The Hamburger Relay and other activities at <http://pazz.tripod.com/lesson.html>



Jump Rope Activities

Jump Rope Shapes, Letters and Numbers is a creative way to change normal jump ropes into fun activities.

Place jump ropes on the floor and have children convert the jump ropes into specific shapes, i.e. square, circle, rectangle and triangle and have them sit in them.

Have the children stand up and jump in the shape and then sit back down. Next, have the children jump in and out of the shape. Have them jump sideways and backwards as well as forwards. Do this for a few minutes and then have them sit back down.

Now, have the children jump over the shapes. Continue for a few minutes and have them sit back down in the shape.

Finally, have the children skip around the room until they find a different

shape. Once they find a new shape have them skip or gallop around the new shape and then go on to a different shape.

In addition to shapes, children can also alter the jump ropes into letters from their names and jump in and out, or over them.

Plus, the jump ropes can be used as a counting game concurrently with physical activity.

Have the children count to 10 while creating the number out of the jump rope.

Before moving onto the next number have the children jump in and out, or over the number.



Jump the River is a simple, fun way to incorporate physical activity. Place a jump rope in a straight line on the floor. Inform the children the jump rope is a river, and challenge them to jump from one side of the river to the other. Widen the river by using two or more jump ropes.

Jump Rope Shapes, Letters and Numbers was created by John Williams, a physical education specialist at Ayden Elementary School in North Carolina.

You can find Jump the River and other activities at www.fitness.gov/funfit/kidsinaction.html

The Name Game

Divide the room into groups of three or four. Create a sheet for each group so the children can spell their names. For each letter in the alphabet have a corresponding activity: A=five jumping jacks, B=five sit ups, C=jump five times, D=march in place, etc.

Have each child complete the physical activity for each letter in their name. In addition to their names,

children can spell their parents' names, or pets' names, or spell out their favorite food or animal.

The Name Game was created by John Williams.



Make physical activity fun!

Some Old Favorites

How about a game of Simon Says? Simon Says is a great way to get children active. Make sure your version of Simon Says gets children up and moving.

How about jumping as far as you can? Simply jumping is an effective and easy way to strengthen bones. With your feet together, bend your knees and jump as far as you can. Have the

child follow your lead. Continue taking turns to see how far you can go.

No matter what activity you choose the bottom line is to get kids moving!





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Printed in Phoenix, Arizona, by the Arizona Department of Education with funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Copies: 0, Total Cost: \$, Unit cost: \$, Date:

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